

A History Of The Fourth Union County Courthouse 1858-2009

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The county courthouse is at the center of the political history of Union County. Here disputes between early settlers were settled, taxes paid, marriage licenses issued, estates settled, deeds recorded, and political conventions held. Thousands of couples have gone to the county clerk's office for marriage licenses. Many thousands more have walked through the doors to pay their taxes. Nearly 2,000 county commissioners' meetings have convened in the building and countless circuit court trials have been held there. In the early years when court was in session only in the spring and fall, the people flocked from their countryside farms and small villages to Jonesboro for trial day.

The over-150-year-old Union County courthouse is also important to the social history of the county. The courthouse was not only used to conduct court and provide offices for county officials, but has also been used for community meetings, concerts, political rallies, and other nongovernmental functions. Civil War soldiers were temporarily housed in the building in 1862. In December 1920, over 200 people attended a meeting of the Union County Cedar Tree Association, which was held at the courthouse.¹ Other meetings have attracted even more people to the courthouse.

The connection the structure has to the people of Union County is what makes the building so historically important. The courthouse provides a link from the earliest pioneers who walked through its doors to present citizens of the county. No other building in Union County provides such a strong connection to the past for so many citizens. Although the size and condition of the structure may not sufficiently meet all the current needs of county government, its importance to the history of Union County is immense.

Earlier Courthouses

There was no courthouse when the first county commissioners held their first meeting on March 2, 1818, at the house of Jacob Hunsaker, Jr.² It was not until their July meeting that the order of business was directed towards making the plans to build the first courthouse. Thomas Cox, William Pyle, and John Grammer were appointed commissioners to "let out to the lowest bidder the building of a court house on the publick square in Jonesborough . . . to be completed against the first day of September."³

The first courthouse was a 20-foot square, one-story log cabin "of round logs of common size."⁴ It had a plank floor "loosely laid down," with a judge's bench.⁵ The courthouse was chinked and daubed, and had one door, one window, and a clapboard roof. A separate 15-foot square jury room was also built.

¹ *Jonesboro Gazette*, Friday, 17 Dec 1920.

² Union County Commissioners Book A, March 2, 1818, 1.

³ Union County Commissioners Book A, July 9, 1818, 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

Thomas Cox, one of the county commissioners, was given the contract to build the courthouse and the court met there for the first time on September 7, 1818.⁶ Cox was paid \$40 for his work. It is likely that Cox used slave labor to assist him in building the first courthouse, as he was an early slave owner in Union County. Jacob Woolf built the separate jury room, also used as a jail, for \$20.⁷ Daniel T. Coleman was also allowed \$4 by the county commissioners for furnishing the courthouse a table.⁸

The first courthouse was intended to be temporary and by December a contract had been awarded to Dr. Nathaniel Davis of Jonesboro to build a wooden frame courthouse on the site of the first one. He received his first payment of \$700 on December 12, 1818.⁹ The money was to come from funds received by the trustees of Jonesboro for the sale of town lots. Davis was paid another \$700 for work done on the courthouse on June 9, 1819.¹⁰

Davis was delayed in building the courthouse and in August 1819 he appeared in court and asked for a longer time to complete his contract. He was given until the first Monday in 1820, and allowed another \$500 by the commissioners.¹¹ The courthouse was still not completed when the commissioners met for the first time in 1820, but Davis was paid another \$500, which he requested to be given to George Woolf.¹² Davis appeared in court again in June 1820 and asked to be "allowed further indulgence of nine months to finish the Court House."¹³ At the end of the nine months, the courthouse was still not complete. The reason for the long delay is not known.¹⁴

To rectify the problem of the half-built courthouse, the county commissioners ordered John Wigle, Jacob Hunsaker, and George Woolf, who had been securities for Davis's bond, to finish building the courthouse by September 1, 1821.¹⁵ The commissioners ordered the balance of the money that had been appropriated for building the courthouse to be paid to the three men. They were given \$400 on June 4, 1821, and the final

⁶ Jacob Hileman emigrated to Union County from Cabarrus Co., N.C., in November 1818. The obituary of Daniel Hileman, son of Jacob, stated that when they arrived in Jonesboro the courthouse was being built on the square (*Jonesboro Gazette*, 10 Nov 1905).

⁷ Union County Commissioners Book A, September 7, 1818, 16.

⁸ Union County Commissioners Book A, September 7, 1818, 17.

⁹ Union County Commissioners Book A, Dec. 12, 1818, 26.

¹⁰ Union County Commissioners Book A, June 9, 1819, 35.

¹¹ Union County Commissioners Book A, August 10, 1819, 38.

¹² Union County Commissioners Book A, March 6, 1820, 55. Woolf used \$20.15 to pay the balance of Cox's taxes (Union County Commissioners Book A, December 4, 1820, 77).

¹³ Union County Commissioners Book A, June 5, 1820, 60.

¹⁴ The reason may have been related to Davis' financial woes. Michael Collier, Jr., a Jonesboro merchant, sued Davis for an unpaid debt and won the case in 1821. There appears to have been bad blood between the two men, as on April 10, 1821, a Union County jury found Collier guilty of assault and battery on Nathaniel Davis and assessed his damages as \$50. To help pay his debts, Dr. Davis and his wife, Huldah, mortgaged their land and town lots to Brownsville Bank on July 4, 1821, for \$770. The bank foreclosed in 1822 and the Davises moved from Jonesboro soon afterward. Union County filed a suit against Thomas Cox, a former county commissioner who awarded Davis the contract to build the courthouse. Dr. Nathaniel Davis and John Wigle were summoned to attend at the county commissioners' court on March 3, 1823. When they didn't appear in court, subpoenas were issued for them. This is the last record of Nathaniel Davis in commissioners' minutes, so he apparently did not appear in court.

¹⁵ Union County Commissioners Book A, March 5, 1821, 79-80.

payment of \$399 on September 4, 1821, after the courthouse was finished.¹⁶ John Wigle placed gravel around the courthouse in March 1824 for which he was paid an additional \$18.¹⁷

The wooden frame courthouse served the county for seventeen years. Jonesboro and Union County were growing and the need for a new, more modern courthouse was evident. On March 7, 1838, John Dougherty, Jacob Rinehart, and Elijah Willard were appointed commissioners to receive bids and devise plans for building a new courthouse in the center of the public square in Jonesboro. The wooden courthouse was moved and sold to the highest bidder.

The county commissioners approved William R. Singleton's architectural plans for a new courthouse. His plans called for a building "to be constructed of brick with a stone foundation 4 feet from the surface of the ground whereon it stands and 2 feet under the ground." The third courthouse was twice the size of the previous one, as it was a two-story building, 40 feet square.

The contract for building the courthouse was awarded to John Freeman, Esq., who the court had earlier licensed to "keep a tavern at his house on his farm in the Mississippi Bottoms." Work on the courthouse began in the late fall of 1838 and took two years to complete. The courthouse was under construction when the Cherokee Indians passed through Jonesboro on their way to Indian Territory during the Trail of Tears. The state passed a law on February 1, 1840, allowing Union County to borrow money to complete county buildings. On April 25, 1840, Jacob Rinehart and Hiram Tripp reported, "We certify that we have this day examined and approved the building and recommend its acceptance by the county court."

The county commissioners accepted the recommendation and the sheriff was directed "to receive of Capt. Freeman the keys of the Court House and see that the doors and window shutters are kept closed only on public days and to see that the same is not abused by any person either within or without."

The old brick courthouse should have lasted much longer than it did. Vandals periodically broke out windows in the courthouse and "it was allowed to go to destruction for utter neglect of those having charge of it." Complaints were "frequently made to the court of the careless and indecent use made of the courthouse."

The courthouse must have received major damage, as the county was authorized by an act of the Illinois Legislature on February 11, 1853, to borrow \$1,000 to repair the courthouse.¹⁸ The county could pay 10 percent interest, unless the loan could be acquired at a lower rate. The legislature also authorized Union County to levy up to 10 cents on one hundred dollars worth of taxable property, in addition to the taxes already allowed by law, which amount could be set aside for repayment of the loan. The new tax rate could continue in force until the debt was paid.

¹⁶ Union County Commissioners Book A, June 4, 1821, 89; September 4, 1821, 93. On March 3, 1823, the county was credited \$60, money returned to the county by Wigle, Hunsaker, and Woolf. Woolf also returned \$140.98 and \$38.97 ½ cents, which was his "commission for his services on the county revinue" (Union County Commissioners Book A, March 3, 1823, 117).

¹⁷ Union County Commissioners Book A, March 2, 1824, 148, 153.

¹⁸ *General Laws of the State of Illinois Passed by the Eighteenth General Assembly Convened Jan. 3, 1853* (Springfield: Lanphier & Walker, 1853) 234-235.

The Present Courthouse

The brick courthouse was still standing in 1858 when Abraham Lincoln came to Jonesboro to debate Stephen A. Douglas, but was described as “very dilapidated” and “had no other floor than a dirt floor.” Foresighted individuals realized the courthouse needed to be replaced and the state legislature passed “An Act to authorize the county court of Union county to borrow money” in 1857. John Dougherty, of Jonesboro, who was then serving in the General Assembly, probably introduced the law.¹⁹ It reads,

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the people of the state of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly, That the county court of Union county be and they are hereby authorized to borrow any sum of money, not exceeding five thousand dollars, for the purpose of erecting a court house and the purchase of and payment for a lot or lots in Jonesboro to erect the same on, in the county of Union.

SECTION 2. For the purposes contemplated in the first section of this act, aid county court is hereby authorized to issue bonds, for the redemption and payment of which the faith of said county may be pledged; said bonds may bear any rate of interest not exceeding ten per cent per annum.

This act to be a public act and to be in force from and after its passage.

APPROVED Jan. 19, 1857.²⁰

Thomas Hileman, who had been appointed by the county commissioners to “borrow money and cause repairs in the courthouse,” submitted his report at the March 6, 1857, meeting.²¹ The courthouse on the square had fallen into such disrepair that it was necessary to build a new one, instead of repair the old one as some wanted to do.

Paying for the courthouse proved to be the problem. The county treasurer, Lard H. Ferguson, reported on March 6, 1857, that there was only \$76.49 in the county treasury and \$40 of that belonged to the county road fund.²² The treasury was replenished three months later when Syrian Davis, the collector and sheriff for Union County, made his report. He had collected \$7,103.70 in personal property and real estate taxes and there remained due the county \$986.73.²³

John E. Naill, John Rinehart, and George W. Walborn drafted the plans for a new courthouse, which were accepted “with some alterations and amendments” by the

¹⁹ John Dougherty was reimbursed \$1.50 by the county for fees paid the Secretary of State for a copy of the law authorizing Union County to borrow money (Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 7, 1857, 205).

²⁰ *Private Laws of the State of Illinois Passed at the Twentieth General Assembly; Begun & Held at the City of Springfield, Jan. 5, 1857* (Springfield: Lanphier & Walker, 1857) 25.

²¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Friday, March 6, 1857, 202.

²² Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 6, 1857, 203.

²³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 5, 1857, 212.

commissioners at their meeting on March 7, 1857.²⁴ Thomas Hileman was appointed the agent to contract for the building of a new courthouse and was empowered to borrow the money at 10 percent interest per annum. The county clerk was authorized to issue bonds for the money borrowed.

Thomas Hileman, agent for Union County, and Jeremiah Rymer, builder, entered into a contract for building the courthouse on March 9, 1857.²⁵ The new courthouse, despite its present appearance, was constructed of bricks.²⁶ The original appearance of the courthouse was very different than that of today, as additions have been made on the north, south, east, and west sides. Only the center part of the present courthouse is a part of the original structure.

The county commissioners' court met for a special term on May 7, 1857, at the courthouse. The purpose of the special meeting seems to have been to discuss the removal of the old courthouse, which they expected to be taken down immediately to make room for the new one. The court decided that the May term of circuit court should be held in Jonesboro Town Hall on lot 21 and should continue to be held there until notified otherwise by the county commissioners.²⁷ There is contradiction in the court records as to whether the circuit court actually met at city hall, but the county paid Jonesboro \$8 for the use of city hall by the circuit court at their May term.²⁸ John Gear was paid \$8 for the use of the Masonic Hall in Jonesboro at the October 1857 term of circuit court and the county also paid Syrian Davis \$2 for the rent of a grand jury room for the same term of court.²⁹

The old brick courthouse, except the stone foundation, lintels, and sills and all other stone in and about the building, was to be sold at public auction to the highest bidder on a six-month credit. The purchaser was to dismantle it and remove the bricks and all rubbish by May 15, 1857. If the purchaser did not remove it on schedule, the county was to hire hands to take the building down and charge the expense to the purchaser.³⁰ There are no records of bids received by the county and in fact there may have been none. The minutes of the county commissioners and for the circuit court for the summer of 1857 all state that they met at the courthouse. The old brick courthouse was still standing seventeen months after the deadline, at the time of the famed Lincoln-Douglas Debate in 1858. The old courthouse on the square continued to be used while work was underway to build the new one.

²⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 7, 1857, 204. John Rinehart was paid \$15 for his services in drawing the plan and assisting in making specifications for the new courthouse (Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 2, 1857, 209). George W. Walborn was paid \$2.50 for assisting in drawing the draft (Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 5, 1857, 213).

²⁵ The name of Jeremiah Rymer was entered in the commissioners' minutes on Wednesday, March 4, 1857, when he appeared in court to pay a \$10 fine assessed against him by William C. Rich, justice of the peace, for assault and battery on the body of Josiah Bean (192).

²⁶ William H. Perrin, *A History of Union, Alexander, and Pulaski Counties, Illinois* (, 1883) 360.

²⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, May 7, 1857, 207. Despite the county order, the minutes of the circuit court for May 11, 1857, record that the circuit court met at the courthouse in Jonesboro (Union County Circuit Court Minutes, Book F, Monday, May 11, 1857, 58).

²⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 3, 1857, 211.

²⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 9, 1857, 235.

³⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 30, 1857, 206.

Thomas Hileman borrowed \$5,000.09 at 10 percent interest per annum during the summer of 1857. Hileman borrowed 9 cents more than the maximum amount authorized by the state legislature, but this small error was easily overlooked. The following list shows the names of those who purchased the bonds so that Union County could build its new courthouse, the amount they loaned the county, and the date.³¹

John Peeler ³²	\$590	11 May 1857
Adam Hileman	\$700	30 May 1857
John Hileman	\$210	9 June 1857
John Fink	\$500	12 June 1857
Catharine Powles	\$376	15 June 1857
Adam Hileman	\$34.09	15 June 1857
James M. Reed	\$500	22 June 1857
Jacob Rinehart	\$1,000	11 Aug 1857
James M. Reed	\$500	30 Aug 1857
Peter H. Casper	\$590	2 Sep 1857

The 10 percent interest was a part of the incentive to loan the county money, but the loans were also a community service. The county could not have afforded to build a new courthouse without the loans. Syrian Davis, sheriff and collector, made his report on July 19, 1858, of taxes collected in Union County. He had collected \$6,427.35 and the county was still owed \$307.25.³³ When the treasurer made his report on September 7, 1858, he stated the county had in specie ("hard money" in coins) only \$80.26.³⁴ With the borrowed money, the county was able to pay Jeremiah Rymer \$3,000 on December 9, 1857, in partial payment for building the courthouse.³⁵

The commissioners originally intended for the new courthouse to be erected on the square in Jonesboro where the previous three had stood, but on June 5, 1857, they purchased parts of lots 8 and 9 in Willard's Addition from Willis and Frances C. (Webb) Willard, of Jonesboro, for \$85. Here they decided to build the courthouse and ordered that the contract with Rymer be revised to show the new site on Market Street.

Rymer completed the courthouse by the summer of 1858. John E. Naill, superintendent in charge of building the courthouse, and Thomas Hileman, agent, reported to the county commissioners' court on August 16, 1858, that the courthouse was completed. Jeremiah Rymer was paid \$1,912.50, the remainder due him for his services in building the courthouse.³⁶ Naill was paid \$50 for his services as superintendent of the

³¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 2, 1857, 210; July 13, 1857, 214; September 7, 1857, 218.

³² The money loaned by John Peeler was the money of his wards, Adaline Peeler and Ellen Peeler. The loan was repaid on August 17, 1863.

³³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, July 19, 1858, 270.

³⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 7, 1858, 283. The treasurer's report made on September 5, 1859, showed that the county treasury was down to \$50.22 (Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 5, 1859, 332).

³⁵ Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 9, 1857, 238-244.

³⁶ Union County Commissioners Minutes, August 16, 1858, 274-279. Rymer received \$4,912.50 for building the courthouse. John E. Naill was paid \$7.52 for goods furnished Jeremiah Rymer for the new

erection of the courthouse.³⁷ The commissioners examined it and ordered that the next term of court be held there and that "no concerts or exhibitions are to be permitted in the courthouse."³⁸ In September 1858, the court met for the first time in the new courthouse.

The circuit court held its first session in the new courthouse on Tuesday, October 5, 1858. The following men were chosen the first grand jurors in the new courthouse: James Barton, Moses Misenhimer, William D. Spiller, George T. McGinnis, Francis Draper, Ephraim Kimmel, John P. Reese, Charles Barringer, Jeremiah Rymer, John Powless, Alfred Clutts, Andrew Smith, Crawford Walston, Caleb Hartline, Abraham Brown, Grant T. Waggoner (foreman), William Noble, and Lafayette Sams.³⁹

The following men were selected as the first petit jurors to meet in the new courthouse: David Penrod, Jr., Jesse T. Adams, Samuel Verble, John Brooks, William Himes, Samuel Hunsaker, James A. Cooms, Moses Carlock, Edward Lipe, Jefferson Lingle, Thomas M. Cox, John N. Rhoads, Jeremiah R. Wallace, Christopher Keller, Alexander Brown, Thomas Perrin, Adam C. Lyerle, Jacob Green, William R. Davis, Henry W. Willard, Samuel Frie, Samuel Boyt, Tobias Misenhimer, and James Cochran.⁴⁰

No doubt much of the usual excitement of court day was enhanced by the new surroundings. Family and friends of defendants and victims filled the seats of the courtroom, not only to show their support, but also to examine the new courthouse. No doubt some immediately began speculating whether the new courthouse was worth the \$5,000 the county had borrowed to build it.

The following cases were on Judge William K. Parrish's docket for the first day of court in the new courthouse:

- People v. John King*- assault to rape
- People v. William Anderson*- assault to rape
- People v. Albert Ellis*- larceny
- People v. Alsey Bunch*- larceny
- People v. John W. Corgan*- perjury
- People v. Jane Sanders*- keeping a lewd house
- People v. James Bryant*- assault to do bodily injury
- People v. Richard Ragan*- assault to do bodily injury
- People v. Eli Hutson*- disturbing the peace of a family in the nighttime
- People v. Joseph Fowler, James Brake, and John Wilson*- disturbing the peace of a family in the nighttime
- People v. Benjamin F. Beaty*- attachment as defaulting witness
- People v. James M. King*- resisting an officer
- People v. James Nickings*- gaming, two counts
- People v. John Carver*- assault with deadly weapon

courthouse on March 3, 1858 (Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 3, 1858, 279). The total amount expended for the courthouse was \$4,920.02. This contradicts a statement made in the history of Union County that was published in 1883, which stated the courthouse was built at a cost of about \$12,000 [William H. Perrin, editor, *History of Union, Alexander, and Pulaski Counties, Illinois* (, 1883) 360].

³⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, August 16, 1858, 279.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Union County Circuit Court Minutes, October 5, 1858, 276.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

People v. Henry Henheart- selling whiskey by less quantity than one gallon, 21 counts

People v. Edward Wilkerson- assault and battery, appeal from justice of the peace.⁴¹

It was a new building, but many of the men still had the same old habits. David Miller and Francis M. Sumner were was paid \$3 for hauling saw dust to the courthouse and spreading it in the courtroom for the October term of circuit court.⁴² The sawdust was used to soak up the spit of tobacco chewers who were not discouraged from spitting on the floor. This method was at least quieter than using metallic spittoons, which had become popular in some places.

When Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas came to Jonesboro to debate on September 15, 1858, they were undoubtedly driven past the new courthouse, the pride of their Union County hosts. It is also not unlikely that they stopped at the courthouse and were given a tour inside. Both men were lawyers and familiar with dozens of courthouses in Illinois and other states. At the time of the debate, the plasterer was putting the finishing touches on the new courthouse. He later recalled that he did not stop his troweling to attend the debate.

Early Renovations

The county had \$79.98 left of the money borrowed to build the courthouse. This was spent on a "back house" for the courthouse, which was built in 1859 and for two stoves furnished the circuit court room. It is not recorded what the "back house" was used for, but Willard & Co., merchants on the Jonesboro square were paid \$20.83 for nails, shingles, and locks for the building.⁴³ Winstead Davie was paid \$20 for the stoves and A.J. Nimmo was given 50 cents for "drage on stoves."

The county continued the upkeep and improvement of the courthouse grounds and Samuel Hargrave was paid \$35 for grading and excavating in front of and around the courthouse in 1860.⁴⁴ William C. Cathey was paid \$6.50 for work done on the guttering to the courthouse at the same time.⁴⁵

1870 Attempt to Move County Seat to Anna

Jonesboro was the oldest town in Union County, but by 1860, its sister town, Anna, had surpassed it in population. Anna was laid out in 1854 by Winstead Davie along the planned route of the Illinois Central and named in honor of his wife, Anna (Willard) Davie. The competition and rivalry between the two towns was inevitable and by 1868 there were efforts to move the county seat from Jonesboro to Anna.

⁴¹ Union County Circuit Court Minutes, October 5, 1858, 276-283.

⁴² Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 8, 1858, 245, 285

⁴³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 5, 1859, 341 and 353.

⁴⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 6, 1860, 364.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

To remove the seat from Jonesboro to Anna required a vote of the citizens of the county. The 1848 Illinois Constitution, which was in effect until 1870, states,

*No county seat shall be removed until the point to which it is proposed to be removed shall be fixed by law, and a majority of the voters of the county shall have voted in favor of its removal to such point.*⁴⁶

To place the question of removal before the voters of Union County required legislative action. The effort failed in the state legislature in 1868 or 1869 and in part due to the efforts of John Dougherty, of Jonesboro, who was President of the Illinois Senate from 1868 to 1870.

A new Illinois constitution went into effect in 1870 and made it even more difficult to remove the county seat. It states,

*No county seat shall be removed until the point to which it is proposed to be removed shall be fixed in pursuance of law, and three-fifths of the voters of the county, to be ascertained in such manner as shall be provided by general law, shall have voted in favor of its removal to such point; and no person shall vote on such question who has not resided in the county six months, and in the election precinct ninety days next preceding such election. The question of the removal of a county seat shall not be oftener submitted than once in ten years to a vote of the people. But when an attempt is made to remove a county seat to a point nearer to the center of a county, then a majority vote only shall be necessary.*⁴⁷

The goal of removing the county seat to Anna did not end with the defeat in Springfield or the roadblocks placed by the new constitution. Certain individuals in Anna were determined to place the question on the ballot and received pledges from candidates for the county court not to vote to build any new county buildings until the issue was settled.

The Union County Court, consisting of Judge Thomas Hileman and Associate Judges Napoleon B. Collins and George W. Penninger, issued an order in 1870 for Joseph J. Koenig, the county surveyor, to design a plan and specifications for a new county jail to be built in Jonesboro and a plan for repairing the old jail. A petition was prepared by several citizens of Anna asking the county court to wait on building the county jail until the voters determined whether the county seat should remain in Jonesboro or be moved to Anna. A preamble was attached to the petition that charged Associate Judges Penninger and Collins of "falsifying their pledges and presuming to instruct the court in its duty."⁴⁸

The petition was presented to the county court on December 2, 1870, after numerous signatures were gathered. Charles M. Willard, Joseph P. Bohannon, and Jesse E. Lentz appeared before the court and Willard read it aloud. The court minutes reported that the

⁴⁶ Illinois Constitution of 1848, Article VII. Counties.

⁴⁷ Illinois Constitution of 1870, County Seats.

⁴⁸ "Fined for Contempt," *Jonesboro Gazette*, December 10, 1870.

three men "attempted to obstruct the business of said court by presenting the following petition."

To the Honorable County Court of Union County:--

*We, the undersigned petitioners recognizing the great principle underlying all our republican institutions, viz. that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; and believing that the pledges made before their election by two members of your honourable body (Judges Collins and Penninger) that in the event of their election no jail or jailor's residence should be build by order of the court until an opportunity had been offered the legal voters of Union County to vote on the location of said county buildings were accepted in good faith by the people at the ballot box; and that such acceptance in connection with the accompanying petition, not only attest the latest and most earnest expression of the popular will of the legal voters and tax payers of the county, but also point out unmistakably the line of their duty and honor in the premises we beg leave to present to your honourable body the following petition and respectfully call your attention to the injustice that would be perpetrated in taxing the people without their consent. . . .*⁴⁹

As soon as he finished the last sentence, Judge Hileman fined the three men \$50 each for contempt and ordered Sheriff Jacob Hileman to keep them in jail until the fines were paid.

The Cairo Bulletin reported that,

*Upon arrival at the gloomy, desolate and filthy old stone hut, Mr. Willard, on account of ill health, concluded not to pass its iron gates, and paid his fine. Bohannon and Lence (sic) on the contrary, marched into the felon's cell with a firm step and a determination to await their fate.*⁵⁰

Willard returned to Anna with the news of the arrest of Bohannon and Lentz. There were cries to go to Jonesboro and liberate the men from jail. Others shouted, "Oh! What an outrage" and "Did not our fathers fight the battles of the Revolution for the right of petition?" Anna attorneys left for Cairo to ask Judge David J. Baker to issue a writ of *habeas corpus* for the imprisoned heroes.

Bohannon and Lentz were not kept in jail overnight. *The Jonesboro Gazette* reported that,

Messrs. Bohanon & Lentz thought they would inspect the old jail and remain in that ancient jug in Jonesboro a few hours, but not liking the

⁴⁹ "The County Court," *Jonesboro Gazette*, December 17, 1870. The names of the signers of the petition were not published in the newspaper and are not listed in the county court minutes. The original petition has not been found.

⁵⁰ "Excitement in Union County," *The Cairo Bulletin*, December 9, 1870.

*ventilation or convenience of this institution, went home in charge of an officer in the evening. They will remain in custody on Thursday.*⁵¹

The commotion over the arrest of Bohannon, Lentz, and Willard soon calmed down and the citizens of Anna either became content with the idea of having the courthouse in Jonesboro or decided the removal of the county seat to Anna wasn't worth the fight. The Union County seat remained in Jonesboro where it has been for 191 years.

Early Repairs and Improvements to Courthouse

The county did minor repairs to the courthouse, as they were needed. An upstairs window had to be fixed in 1888 when Thomas "Tom" Ogles, like Injun Joe in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, jumped through it during his trial for stealing wheat.⁵² The first substantial improvements made to the courthouse property were in 1891. The county commissioners accepted bids for putting in a stone base for an iron fence in front of the courthouse. Designs for the fence were presented to the commissioners, who then made the selection of "a good substantial iron fence."⁵³ Bids were opened and read on June 23, 1891. The bid for the stonework accepted was from Chase and Sons:

12-inch wide; 110 foot stone base course	\$88.00
18-inch high, 7 cubic yards rubble wall	\$24.50
digging ditch	<u>1.25</u>
	\$113.75 ⁵⁴

The bid for building the iron fence in front of the courthouse was given to Alvan Cook on July 13, 1891.⁵⁵ William C. Rich, Jr., and his deputy were appointed to superintend the building of the fence around the courthouse. The east and west strings up to the front fence were to be wooden picket fences, and the remainder of the fence was to be repaired with the old lumber where the picket fence was built.⁵⁶

There are various entries in county commissioners' minutes that show that money was paid to different individuals for "labor on court house." William P. Rushing was allowed \$2.50 for such work in 1892.⁵⁷ John Silber, the first custodian or janitor in the courthouse, was frequently paid for "work at court house," "work on court yard," or

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Jonesboro Gazette*, July 16, 1898, and Oct. 1, 1898. Ten years after the incident he was shot and killed by officials near Fountain Church south of Marion. He and his brother, Ben Ogles, were well known horse thieves.

⁵³ *Jonesboro Gazette*, July 1891.

⁵⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 23, 1891, 577-578. Charles S. Chase was paid \$113.75 on June 13, 1891, for building a stone wall (Union County Commissioners Minutes, July 13, 1891, 582). Charles S. Chase & Son were paid \$16 "for setting up C. H. fence" (Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 21, 1891, 1). William C. Rich was paid \$29.87 "for cash paid for labor on court house fence" (Union County Commissioners Minutes, October 29, 1891, 14).

⁵⁵ Union County Commissioners Minutes, July 13, 1891, 583. Alvan Cook was paid \$131.87 for the courthouse fence (Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 22, 1891, 5).

⁵⁶ Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 23, 1891, 9.

⁵⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 1893, 112; September 1893, 132; January 15, 1894, 155.

“janitoring and other work.”⁵⁸ Peter Peter was the second janitor and began work about 1896.⁵⁹ John C. Biles was the janitor for nine years from about 1910 to 1920. S. F. Carter was janitor beginning in 1920 and was paid a monthly salary of \$60.⁶⁰ Many other full-time janitors have been hired by the county to do the daily maintenance to the courthouse.

Room for Rent

Several lawyers rented upstairs rooms in the courthouse for office space. This is believed to have been a typical practice in courthouses in southern Illinois during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of the lawyers with offices in the courthouse held public office as a judge or state’s attorney. At the time, such office holders were allowed to continue to practice law as an attorney. James H. Smith is known to have had a room in the old brick courthouse that set in the middle of the Jonesboro Square.⁶¹ Lawyers who had professional advertisements in the *Jonesboro Gazette* that mentioned offices in the courthouse were Monroe C. Crawford, W. S. Day, David W. Karraker, Philemon E. Hileman, Jesse Ware, James Lingle, Henry F. Bussey, Hugh Andrews, J. A. Linville, Jackson Frick, Holly R. Buckingham, William D. Lyerle, A. Ney Sessions and R. Wallace Karraker.⁶² An advertisement in the January 23, 1920, issue of the *Jonesboro Gazette* read, “I have moved my law office from the court house to the office of C. C. Crawford across the street. George W. Crawford”⁶³. R. Wallace Karraker opened a law office in the courthouse in January 1921, after he was elected state’s attorney.⁶⁴

No doubt the county charged the lawyers for rent of office space, but the only record found of the charge for leasing a room was in the September 1891 commissioners’ minutes which show the commissioners charged Karraker & Ware \$44 from December 3, 1888, to December 1, 1889, Karraker & Lingle \$84 from December 1, 1889, to September 1, 1891, and Jesse Ware \$27 from December 1, 1890, to September 1, 1891.⁶⁵

Not only did lawyers have offices in the courthouse, but also Joseph H. Samson and Ed Samson, abstracters and notary public, rented an office there. Another abstracter, Will L. Lingle, rented an office in the courthouse in 1905.⁶⁶

As county government grew and records in the various offices began to accumulate, there simply was no longer extra space to rent to lawyers or other professionals and the practice seems to have been discontinued by the early 1920s. By the 1960s there wasn’t

⁵⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 1892, 22, 172.

⁵⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, 1896, 325.

⁶⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 8, July 6, 1920, 337.

⁶¹ *Jonesboro Gazette*, August 30, 1854, and April 11, 1855.

⁶² *Jonesboro Gazette*, November 10, 1865, October 27, 1866, August 3, 1867, April 2, 1870, November 26, 1870, March 24, 1888, October 13, 1894, Dec. 16, 1899, Feb. 17, 1905, Aug. 17, 1906, May 10, 1907, April 17, 1908, April 23, 1909, March 18, 1910, May 12, 1911, May 9, 1913, Jan. 16, 1914, Feb. 12, 1915, March 3, 1916, May 15, 1917, Feb. 22, 1918.

⁶³ *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 23, 1920

⁶⁴ *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 7, 1921.

⁶⁵ Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 22, 1891, 7.

⁶⁶ *The Anna Talk*, August 4, 1905.

even enough room in the courthouse for sufficient office space of elected officials, which made the option of renting office space archaic.

1894 Addition

Just before the turn of the century, when the courthouse was 35 years old, the structure began to show major flaws in its construction. The county commissioners, Willis Cauble, Levi J. Hess, and Eli Eddleman, issued the following resolution on December 21, 1893:

Whereas; the frame work of the roof of the court house has spread and is out of repair and,

Whereas; the wall of the court house has on account of such defect in the frame work spread apart, and

Whereas; the cupola is out of repair, useless, unnecessary and burdensome to the building therefore be it

*Resolved; That the frame work aforesaid be repaired and that the walls be securely anchored and that cupola be removed and the roof extended over the vacant space and that D. W. Karraker be and his is hereby appointed without fee or charge, superintendent of such work and hereby direct him to cause the work aforesaid to be done in a proper and secure manner report thereof to this court at its next meeting.*⁶⁷

The commissioners had other considerations besides the need for major repairs. The possibility of a courthouse fire spurred the county commissioners to also consider building two fireproof vaults for the county clerk's and circuit clerk's offices. The editor of the *Anna Talk* opined in January 1894, "the loss of the building itself would be a matter of small consequence as compared with the destruction of the county records."⁶⁸ The old records were likely stored away in wooden pigeonhole cabinets. There was no protection against the loss by fire of court records, deeds, vital records or other documents filed daily at the courthouse. The editor of the *Jonesboro Gazette* stated that the county commissioners in the past had often been urged to add vaults to the courthouse. He wrote, "We are satisfied that the tax payers of the county desire it. Build the vaults."⁶⁹

The board informally discussed the addition of vaults to the courthouse at its first meeting in January 1894 and authorized County Clerk John Henry Hilboldt to investigate the matter and find an estimate for building the vaults. The *Jonesboro Gazette* reported that it "devoutly hoped" that the county officers would take action to build the vaults. The newspaper also reported, "Some good work has recently been done on the court house, and particularly the cupola, under the direction of D. W. Karraker."⁷⁰ Thankfully, Karraker did not take the advice of the county commissioners and remove the cupola from atop the courthouse.

⁶⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 23, 1893, 151.

⁶⁸ "Build Vaults for the Records," *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 6, 1894.

⁶⁹ "Build Vaults for the Records," *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 6, 1894.

⁷⁰ *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 20, 1894.

When the county commissioners met on January 30, 1894, the first topic of discussion was the erection of vaults in the circuit clerk's office on the west side of the courthouse and county clerk's office on the east side of the courthouse. The board advertised for bids to be filed on or before February 12, 1894.⁷¹ The county commissioners held a special meeting on February 13, 1894, at the courthouse to open the bids. The bids were:

Ben F. Warner	\$2,994.00
E. C. English	\$2,835.00
Coffman & Farrer	\$3,006.20
A. W. Robinson	\$2,335.00
B. F. Mangold	\$2,916.00

The board accepted the lowest bid from Abel W. Robinson, who had built the courthouse in Kennett, Mo., and the Palmer Hotel in Paducah, Ky.⁷² The following contract was entered into between Robinson and the county board.

I, A. W. Robinson, hereby agree to build and complete, on or before the second Monday of July 1894, two vaults and two upper rooms adjoining the court house of the material and in the manner, provided in certain specifications filed in the office of the clerk of the county court, for the sum of Twenty Three Hundred and Thirty five Dollars, in consideration of which the county Board awards him the contract and agrees to pay him the sum above mentioned, when the buildings are completed according to specifications and accepted by the Board.

Feb. 13—1894

A. W. Robinson

Willis Cauble

L. J. Hess County Board

Eli Eddleman⁷³

The specifications called for two, two-story additions, one on each side of the south end of the courthouse. The vaults were to be on the first floor and rooms on the second floor. The vaults are still used by the circuit clerk's and county clerk's offices. The specifications approved by the county commissioners stated,

Location, one on the east and one on the west sides of and abutting the wall of the court house. Dimensions, 20 feet by 13 feet on the outside, length east and west. Foundations to be at least two feet below surface at shallowest point, and deeper if necessary to insure good foundation; the excess below that point to be added to the contract price at the rate at which the rock wall is built. Material, foundation, rubble masonry with footing of two courses 36 inches wide, 16 inches thick. Remainder of rock

⁷¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, January 30, 1894, 157.

⁷² Obituary of Abel W. Robinson, *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 4, 1914.

⁷³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, February 13, 1894, 158. A. W. Robinson also made a bond in the sum of \$4,670 on the same day, with Hiram Green, A. D. Bohannon, and W. H. Corlis as securities.

wall 30 inches thick, with water table of cut stone like that used in the wall of court house. Vaults, double brick walls, outer wall 12 inches, inner wall 8 inches and a four inch air chamber between, securely tied together not less than 6 courses, between headers. Above vaults, 12 inch wall, top of wall to be on level with top of court house wall. All floors to be level with the floors of the court house. Ceiling of vaults to be of steel "I" beams 16 inches deep and 5 inches face, 16 feet long, 28 inches from center to center of beam, brick arching 9 inches thick turned between the hard brick with bearing plates covered with concrete at least 6 inches at thinnest place, and finished on top with Portland cement. The floors shall be thoroughly tamped and made perfectly solid, and finished with concrete with smooth surface on top of Portland cement. Concrete 5 inches gravel slushed with Louisville cement, and finish to be 1 inch of Portland cement. Vaults and rooms to be plastered with hard finish. Brick to be hard merchantable brick. Vaults to have double vault doors, and a window in the west end of west vault and east end of east vault; two lights to window 24x36 inches, panes double strength, with fire proof shutters on the inside, and 5/8 inch bars on the outside set in plates at top and bottom. Upper rooms to have three windows each, 30x48 inches, panes double strength. All windows to be box frame and sash hung on weights. Each room shall have a door opening into the courtroom. The doors of vaults and upper room shall be made by removing windows and brick wall underneath windows and rebricking up to size of door. Upper doors 7x3 feet, 1 1/2 inch pine. Vault doors shall be double doors, 40 inches wide and 78 inches high, opening in the wall 80 1/2 inches high, width 43 1/2 inches, thickness of wall 20 inches. Vault doors shall be thoroughly fire proof with combination locks, substantially the same as the doors to vault, in First National Bank in Anna. Upper joists shall be 2x8x16 inches from center to center. Sheeting shall be second-class flooring, 1 inch thick. Roof shall be of I. C. tin, with proper flashing, standing seams, with tubing down to the ground and with necessary guttering; shall slope to north with 3/4 -inch pitch to foot. Roof tubing and all wood work shall have two coats of paint. Walls shall be coped with stone 16 inches wide. Caps of cut stone and sill for windows to correspond with caps and sills of main building. The successful bidder shall enter into bond to the County of Union in the sum of double the contract price, with security to be approved by the County Board conditioned that he will construct the building and do and perform the work according to the specifications in a workman-like manner, and all material shall be first-class except as otherwise provided in specifications, and to complete the same by the second Monday in July 1894.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Jonesboro Gazette, Feb. 17, 1894

The work commenced the second week of April and the vaults were finished quickly.⁷⁵ Chase & Sons put in the stone foundation for the additions and used cut stone from their quarry and John Chase followed up with the brickwork.⁷⁶ A. W. Robinson received his last payment for his work by the county commissioners at their June 1894 meeting.⁷⁷ With the addition of the fireproof vaults, county records in the circuit clerk's and county clerk's offices were more secure and much needed space was added. The *Jonesboro Gazette* reported in July 1894

*The court house vaults are now completed and serving the purpose for which they were built. The board of county commissioners deserves credit for this desirable improvement. Property owners and tax payers can now rest assured that the county records, the loss of which would result in inextricable confusion, are safe from any possible danger. The money they cost was well spent. Besides the vaults, the county has two more upstairs rooms at its disposal, the want of which has been frequently felt during the sitting of courts.*⁷⁸

Ira V. Lee was paid \$85.50 in March 1899 for "cementing vaults."⁷⁹ It's uncertain what this refers to, as the floors of the vaults were supposed to be cement. This may refer to the first stucco that was placed over the outside brick walls of the courthouse. Only in places where the stucco is crumbling can one see the original brick used in the courthouse construction.

Courthouse Repairs

By the early 1900s the courthouse was operating under a fiscal budget and four separate funds were created for the courthouse. They were for repairs to courthouse, courthouse janitor, telephone service for courthouse, and one simply called "courthouse fund."⁸⁰ Utilizing a more modern budget mode of operation, in theory, meant the county could accumulate money in specific funds and have it available for major repairs to the building. There were many entries in early commissioners' minutes that show expenses, such as courthouse office supplies, were frequently paid for from the "repairs to courthouse" fund.

Repairs and renovation were made to the courthouse as deemed necessary by the county commissioners and as county funds allowed. M. J. Wiggs was occasionally mentioned in the court records as receiving payment for courthouse repairs. In May 1919 he was paid \$58.25 for "paper hanging at courthouse."⁸¹ At least a part of the courthouse seems to have had wallpaper at one time.

⁷⁵ *Jonesboro Gazette*, April 14, 1894.

⁷⁶ *Jonesboro Gazette*, April 21, 1894, May 5, 1894.

⁷⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 1894, 167, 178.

⁷⁸ *Jonesboro Gazette*, July 14, 1894.

⁷⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 22, 1899, 482.

⁸⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 8, September 16, 1919, 233.

⁸¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 8, May 19, 1919, 208.

Major repairs were authorized to the courthouse by the county board at their February 20, 1973, meeting. Two bids were received for the repairs:

Anna-Jonesboro Lumber Company, Anna	\$1,495.00
M.B. Builders, Anna	\$1,589.00

The board accepted the lowest bid and authorized the repairs.⁸² Work involved in the repairs included the replacement of two doors downstairs and two doors upstairs and the paneling of one door outside the upstairs courtroom. This project was paid for by the county's share of funds from Federal Revenue Sharing.⁸³

A Few Courthouse Firsts

It is uncertain when the courthouse was first supplied with electricity and electric lighting. In January 1876 complaints were made that there was not even a street lamp in front of the courthouse. The city of Jonesboro hired someone to light the lamps each night and extinguish the flame every morning.⁸⁴ Electric lights were first placed in town in 1893.⁸⁵ The county commissioners made an agreement with the city of Jonesboro in 1899 to furnish the courthouse with "22 16-candle power lights properly placed in court house."⁸⁶ A. V. Cook was allowed \$5 by the county commissioners for electric lights at their March 1900 meeting and in June 1900 the city of Jonesboro was paid \$5.65 for "electric lights in courthouse."⁸⁷ By the teens C.I.P.S. was providing electricity to the courthouse.

Sheriff William C. Rich, Jr., and his deputy were to superintend the "overhauling of the privy" in 1891.⁸⁸ The "privy" or outhouse was used as an outdoor toilet. A record has not been found to date when the courthouse first received indoor running water or an indoor bathroom. John M. Chase was allowed \$77.50 by the county for building a cistern and patching the courthouse.⁸⁹ A cistern is a receptacle or tank used for holding fresh water. In this case the water was probably rainwater that was collected from roof runoff and used for washing and drinking water in the courthouse.

Telephone lines first came to Jonesboro in 1878. There was one telephone to receive messages, which then would be delivered anywhere in Anna or Jonesboro for 10 cents.⁹⁰ In 1898 the Telephone & Telegraph Company put in a line that ran to the rear of John M. Grieb & Sons store and connected residents of Jonesboro with the outside world by telephone.⁹¹ It is not known when the first telephone was installed in the courthouse, but

⁸² Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 17, February 20, 1973, 15.

⁸³ "County Commissioners Accept Bids on Remodeling at Court House," *The Gazette-Democrat*, February 22, 1973.

⁸⁴ *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 22, 1876.

⁸⁵ William E. Keller, "A History of Jonesboro" (thesis) 82.

⁸⁶ Union County Commissioners Minutes, October 17, 1899, 528.

⁸⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 1900, 554, 565.

⁸⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 23, 1891, 9.

⁸⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 17, 1894, 183.

⁹⁰ *Jonesboro Gazette*, March 29, 1879.

⁹¹ *Jonesboro Gazette*, August 27, 1898.

the first mention of payment by the county for telephone service to the courthouse was in 1899. J. M. Grieb & Son were paid \$2.40 for "telephone service" and J. W. Laws was paid \$1.50 for "telephone rent."⁹² In June 1899 the county commissioners granted a franchise to Interior Telephone Company to build and operate a telephone line along the highway between Vienna and Jonesboro.⁹³ During the teens and the early 20s, Murphysboro Telephone Company provided the courthouse with telephone service. The charge for three months of service to the courthouse and county poor farm east of Anna was \$59.37.⁹⁴

Women were not frequently seen in the courthouse during the 1800s or early 1900s and were not even given the right to vote in national elections until the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1920. Illinois had allowed women to vote in elections even before that and some towns gave them the franchise very early for local elections. The first women were not called to serve on a jury at the Union County courthouse until June 1921. Judge Butler ordered a special jury of six women and six men be assembled to decide the divorce in the case of *Ara R. Lamer v. Walter J. Lamer*. The first women to serve on a jury in Union County were Mrs. Thomas H. Plemon, Mrs. A. J. Halterman, and Mrs. Virgil Smith, of Jonesboro; Mrs. D. W. Grear, Mrs. John H. Green, and Mrs. Robert Choate, of Anna.⁹⁵ The men on the same jury were George Norton, L. D. Hileman, W. A. Caraker, William Rhymer, Everett Walker, and Chris Zwahlen. The parties in the case were from Cobden. D. W. Karraker was the attorney for Mrs. Lamer and James E. Lingle and C. E. Feirich were the lawyers for Mr. Lamer. The mixed jury was such an historical event that a photograph was taken of the jury and placed on display in the circuit clerk's office.⁹⁶

1963 Addition

Another major addition was made to the courthouse in 1963. Charles E. McIntosh, circuit clerk, and Perl Zwahlen, county clerk, met with the county commissioners in the morning of April 22, 1963, to discuss acquiring additional space for their offices. They stated that the courthouse would need more area when the Judicial Article to the 1870 Illinois Constitution, which had been amended in 1962, when into effect on January 1, 1964. This constitutional amendment eliminated the offices of county judge and probate judge and made the judges holding those offices associate circuit judges. The amendment also did away with the offices of justice of the peace and police magistrate and made circuit courts the only trial courts in the state. This was expected to increase the documents and caseload of the circuit courts, which made additional space necessary for the circuit court office to properly house and care for the public records accumulated there.

The board recommended enlarging the courthouse by building two, one-story rooms, one on the southeast corner of the courthouse and one on the southwest corner of the

⁹² Union County Commissioners Minutes, 1899, 497, 501.

⁹³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 19, 1899, 496.

⁹⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 8, December 18, 1916, 3.

⁹⁵ "Court House Notes," *Jonesboro Gazette*, Friday, June 24, 1921.

⁹⁶ *Jonesboro Gazette*, Friday, July 8, 1921.

courthouse. Dewey Brown, a contractor, was present at the meeting, and offered to build the rooms for less than \$10,000, or \$5,000 each. "And it appearing that there is sufficient funds in the regular building fund in the County Treasury to build one of the rooms, and the County Clerk has sufficient funds as excess fees to build the other room," the county board hired Brown to make the addition. The county did not advertise for bids, which was unusual but merely awarded the contract to Brown and authorized him to begin immediate construction. The commissioners were familiar with Brown's work, as he had done minor repairs to the courthouse in earlier years. He was the son of James D. R. Brown, who was county treasurer from 1904 to 1910.

The county commissioners later revised their agreement with Dewey Brown to allow him to construct two, two-story rooms. He reported that he could build four rooms instead of two for "a very nominal amount" and in order to "expedite matters and gain additional space" Brown was authorized to extend the building.⁹⁷ No written contract was recorded in the board minutes and dollar figure for the "nominal amount" was not recorded in the county commissioners' records.

The county board stated that money was in the treasury to pay for the additions, but at the same meeting they passed a resolution authorizing the county "to borrow funds from time to time as the same are needed to defray the necessary expenses of said County." The board authorized the county clerk and county treasurer to issue warrants against the anticipated collection of 1962 taxes for which the county would pay at least 6 percent per annum.⁹⁸

The additions were completed in 1963 and Dewey Brown was paid \$5,260 for building them on June 24, 1963, which was no doubt only a partial payment.⁹⁹

1967 Addition

The county commissioners passed a resolution on May 1, 1967, calling for another addition to the courthouse. The resolution reads,

WHEREAS, The Board of Commissioners of Union County, Illinois, having discussed the need for an expansion of the County Collector's and County Clerk's Offices in order to properly house and care for Public Records accumulated, and to provide for a larger work space of such offices, and

WHEREAS, There might be a future need for a Supervisor of Assessment's Office and other local Government Offices, and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the State of Illinois might require an addition to the Court room in order to provide a Jury's Room with rest-room facilities, Judge's Chamber, and Lawyer's Conference Room, and

WHEREAS, the cost of the addition would be approximate \$16,000.00 and

⁹⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 15, April 22, 1963, 145.

⁹⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 15, April 22, 1963, 147.

⁹⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 15, June 24, 1963, 155.

WHEREAS, There are sufficient funds in the Building Fund in the County Treasury and there are more than enough funds in the Excess Officers' Fees' Fund to provide such addition to the Court House

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Mr. Dewey Brown, a contractor from Jonesboro, Illinois, be authorized to begin immediate construction of the addition in accordance with the plans submitted to the County Board of Commissioners.

Dated this 1st day of May, 1967

L. E. Foley

Clemon E. Johnson

Jesse Aldridge

Attest: Fred W. Blaylock
*County Clerk*¹⁰⁰

The addition was to expand the working space for the county clerk's and county collector's offices, but the commissioners planned a second story to the addition in the future, to supply a jury room, with restroom facilities, a judge's chamber, and a lawyers' conference room, which the Illinois Supreme Court had recently ruled all courthouses in Illinois had to provide. A building used by the Civil Defense served as the foundation for the new addition.

The Gazette-Democrat reported, "The County Board is hoping to avoid construction of a new Court House, which would necessitate the raising of taxes . . . the board is attempting to avoid such expenses as have been incurred in other counties such as Jackson and Alexander, among others."¹⁰¹

The board received bids at its September 18, 1967, meeting for the installation of guttering, downspouts, air conditioning, and heating for the new courthouse addition. Bids received were:

Anna Sheet Metal	\$1,465.00
Merriman Plumbing	\$1,455.82

The county board selected the higher bid, as the Merriman Plumbing bid was only for air conditioning and heating and did not include guttering and downspouts.¹⁰²

1976 Addition

The Union County board of commissioners passed the following resolution at their October 12, 1976, meeting.

¹⁰⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 16, May 1, 1967, 14.

¹⁰¹ "Ton Construct New Addition to Court House," *The Gazette-Democrat*, May 4, 1967.

¹⁰² "County Board Awards Contract," *The Gazette-Democrat*, September 21, 1967.

State of Illinois)
) SS ADDITION TO COURTHOUSE
 County of Union)

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Union County, Illinois having discussed the need for an expansion of the County Supervisor of Assessment's Office and more Vault space for the County Clerk and Records Records to properly house and care for the Public Records accumulated, and to provide for a larger work space of such offices, and

WHEREAS, There being sufficient funds available to provide such addition to the Court House.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the County Board of Commissioners hereby authorize the County Clerk to advertise bids for the proposed addition to the existing Court House forthwith.

Dated this 12th day of October, A.D. 1976.

Carl W. Boyd

W. P. Rendleman

Herman L. Stokes, Union County Board of Commissioners¹⁰³

The county commissioners opened the bids for an addition to the courthouse at their next meeting. The following bids were received:

J. D. Construction Co., Anna, Ill.	\$58,539.10
Vincent Construction Co., Anna, Ill.	\$59,980.00
Associated Lumber Co., Anna, Ill.	\$66,186.20

The board unanimously accepted the lowest bid from J. D. Construction Company and contracted with them to make the addition.¹⁰⁴ The addition was 1,950 square feet at the northeast corner of the courthouse. Work began on the project in late October 1976.¹⁰⁵

The money for this addition was taken from the housing fund.¹⁰⁶ Funding for future repairs or additions became a concern for the county. At its November 1976 meeting the board of commissioners authorized a 4-cent tax on every \$100 of assessed property to be used for a building fund. The tax was to continue for five years and to end in 1981.¹⁰⁷ The funds generated by the tax levy were to be used for county construction projects.

Handicapped Accessibility

An Illinois law passed as early as 1967 required new public buildings in Illinois to be built handicapped accessible. Subsequent state and federal laws required public buildings

¹⁰³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 17, October 12, 1976, 421

¹⁰⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 17, October 25, 1976.

¹⁰⁵ "Courthouse Contract Awarded," *Southern Illinoisan*, October 28, 1976.

¹⁰⁶ "Board Votes to Expand Union County courthouse," *Southern Illinoisan*, October 15, 1976.

¹⁰⁷ *Southern Illinoisan*, November 16, 1976.

to be altered to make them easily accessible to those handicapped or in wheelchairs when it was “readily achievable.” Currently the courthouse has ramps leading up to the front door of the building and an elevator has been installed to allow access to the second floor courtroom. There seems to have been some foot dragging on the part of the county board to bring the courthouse up to standards in this area.

The county commissioners had their first discussion about a wheelchair ramp for the courthouse at their October 1989 meeting.¹⁰⁸ No record was found of any action being taken by the board. Sheriff Robin Dillon reported to the commissioners about a prisoner falling down the steps from the courtroom and Judge Lewis voiced some concern about prisoners falling down the stairs. Sheriff Dillon asked the board at its December 11, 1990, meeting to create a plan to make the courthouse handicap accessible as soon as possible.¹⁰⁹ Sheriff Dillon asked the commissioners the following month to “put something in writing or appoint a committee about the accessibility of the courtroom and what will be done to make it accessible.”¹¹⁰ There was more discussion on the subject at the February 1991 meeting and in March the commissioners asked Bill Boyd to “check into putting wheelchair ramps at the front entrance of courthouse.”¹¹¹

Sheriff Dillon again mentioned his concern about making the courthouse handicapped accessible at the February 19, 1992, board meeting. He said the courthouse should have been in compliance on January 23, 1992, but had failed to meet the deadline.¹¹² In March 1992 the board members voiced optimism that the courthouse, except for the courtroom, would soon be in compliance with handicapped accessible laws.¹¹³

Southern Five had \$150,000 in grant money available in May 1999 for helping to meet buildings’ compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.¹¹⁴ The courthouse still needed an elevator, but the estimated cost was \$202,250, and the county’s share of the expense would have been \$52,250. The commissioners decided the courthouse did not need an elevator and applied for a grant to build a ramp into the assessor’s office across the street from the courthouse. The grant application was resubmitted in February 2000.¹¹⁵ The grant was declined and the county purchased the material for the ramp and the Highway Department workers built it in September 2000.¹¹⁶

Furnace and Air Conditioning

For heat the courthouse originally used wood. Thomas Hileman, circuit clerk, was allowed \$3 for sawing the wood used to heat his office in 1857.¹¹⁷ The courthouse began to use coal for fuel by the late 1800s. Each year the commissioners would accept bids for

¹⁰⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, October 11, 1989, 531.

¹⁰⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 11, 1990, 603.

¹¹⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, January 29, 1991, 613.

¹¹¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 18, 1991, 626.

¹¹² Union County Commissioners Minutes, February 19, 1992.

¹¹³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 25, 1992.

¹¹⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, May 5, 1999.

¹¹⁵ Union County Commissioners Minutes, February 2, 2000.

¹¹⁶ Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 6, 2000.

¹¹⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 6, 1857.

40 tons of coal for the courthouse and jail to be delivered to the bin by the courthouse. The contract was given to Carter & Walter in 1917 at \$4.40 a ton.¹¹⁸

Heating in the courthouse for many decades was rudimentary. The county awarded Phillip Weiss the contract for tearing down and rebuilding five flues in the courthouse, tearing down and rebuilding benches in the courthouse, and painting up all the cracks in the building. The flues were to be not less than 85 feet high and plastered on the inside. Weiss' bid was \$75 and he agreed to have all the work completed by September 15, 1891, and to be responsible for any damage that he did to the roof or elsewhere.¹¹⁹

During the Great Depression, a representative of R. Z. Gill & Co. of Murphysboro, Illinois, was present at the board meeting in July 1935 to discuss preparing plans and an estimate for a P.W.A. project for repair of and installation of a heating plant for the courthouse. The board agreed to let R. Z. Gill & Co. prepare the plans, blue prints, and estimates for 3 percent of the estimated cost of the project. If the board and the federal government approved their plan, they would receive 5 percent of the entire fee of estimation. They would also supervise and inspect the project as it progresses and until it is completed to the acceptance of the county board.¹²⁰

In August 1935, Daniel R. Davie, chairman of the county board, authorized R. Z. Gill & Co. to file an application for a grant to aid in financing construction of alterations, heating, and plumbing in the courthouse, with the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works.¹²¹ It is not certain if the project grant was approved, but R. Z. Gill was paid \$150 for repairs to the courthouse in September 1935.¹²²

The courthouse has had several furnaces and boilers during its long history. A new boiler for purchased for the courthouse in September 1950 from R. S. Lingle, at a cost of \$1,757.79.¹²³ The board agreed to replace the furnace in the Civil Defense room of the courthouse on September 30, 1992.¹²⁴ The contract was given to Middleton Heating & Cooling for \$750. The commissioners received the proposal on July 27, 2007, from Gurley & Son for \$1,449.30 for replacing the furnace in the courthouse.¹²⁵ They were paid \$2,499.43 in August 2007 and \$2,188.75 in November 2007.¹²⁶

Air conditioning was not common in public building in the United States until after World War II. The first air conditioning units at the Union County courthouse were small inefficient window units. The second story of the courthouse was air conditioned in 1985 by Gurley Heating & Cooling at a cost of \$1,960.40.¹²⁷ Not all county offices at the courthouse had air conditioning even in 1992. The board of commissioners asked Robin

¹¹⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 19, 1917, 47.

¹¹⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, July 24, 1891. Commissioners William A. Ridge and Levi J. Hess were paid \$59.75 for "cash paid out on building flues C.H." (Union County Commissioners Minutes, March 1892, 40).

¹²⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, July 15, 1935.

¹²¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, August 20, 1935.

¹²² Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 2, 1935.

¹²³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 13, September 5, 1950, 230.

¹²⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, September 30, 1992.

¹²⁵ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 24, July 27, 2007, 48.

¹²⁶ Union County Clerk's check register and statement.

¹²⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, July 30, 1985, and August 5, 1985.

Dillon to investigate the situation at it May 13, 1992, meeting.¹²⁸ Air conditioning was added to the treasurer's office in the courthouse in July 1993 for \$2,250.¹²⁹ The courthouse had window air conditioning units, but the county commissioners agreed to accept bids for central air in the state's attorney's, circuit clerk's, and county clerk's offices in April 1998.¹³⁰ Middleton Heating & Cooling submitted a bid of \$8,100, which was accepted.¹³¹

Painting

The courthouse has received numerous coats of paint over the years, especially after the stucco used to cover the brick was added to the outer walls. The county board requested bids for painting the courthouse and jail at its April 23, 1985, meeting. Two bids were received:

Herb Garris	\$8,600
Rick Warren	\$8,342

The board accepted the higher of the two bids. No reason for rejecting the lower bid was stated. Garris was also authorized to clean and repair the courthouse dome at cost at their July 16, 1985, meeting. Tony Milam painted the dome of the courthouse for \$3,000 in December 1997.¹³² Milam painted it again the following year for \$2,225.¹³³

Courthouse Security

The county began to investigate the need for security at the front door of the courthouse in 1994.¹³⁴ In neighboring Pulaski County in October 1993, Wallace Bobo, a defendant in a trial, was shot on the courthouse steps in Mound City. To prevent such incidents, courthouses began installing metal detectors and stationing a deputy to search all those entering the courthouse for weapons. No immediate action was taken and the topic was again discussed at the May 3, 1995, board meeting. The county commissioners also voiced a need for security at their board meetings.

Currently the Union County Sheriff's Department provides a deputy as security at the front entrance to the courthouse, while the rear entrance remains locked. All visitors must sign in at the front desk, record what office or offices they plan to visit, and pass through the metal detector before being allowed further entrance to the courthouse. Homeland Security legislation since 9/11 has ensured that the increased security at courthouses is likely to continue.

¹²⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, May 13, 1992.

¹²⁹ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, July 21, 1993.

¹³⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, April 1, 1998.

¹³¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, April 15, 1998.

¹³² Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 17, 1997.

¹³³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 1, 1998.

¹³⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, June 20, 1994.

Roof Repairs

The greatest concern and the largest expense for courthouse repairs in recent decades has been the roof. Over twenty years ago concerns about the courthouse roof were first voiced in county board meetings. Doyle Graham was present at the county commissioners meeting on February 26, 1985, to discuss roof repairs to the courthouse.¹³⁵ The commissioners agreed to accept bids, but there was no further mention of bids in the minutes for 1985.

Darryle Rogers repaired the courthouse roof in October 1991. This was a small patchwork job for which Rogers was paid \$665.¹³⁶ The courthouse roof had major problems and Sheriff Robin Dillon advised the commissioners that the roof was leaking badly and in need of repair. Darryle Rogers was again called in to make the repairs.¹³⁷

The county commissioners discussed problems with the courthouse roof at their February 5, 1992, board meeting. They hired Garrison & Jones Architects, Inc., in February 1992 to complete a roof survey and agreed to pay them an hourly rate up to \$2,500.¹³⁸ The architectural study was completed and presented at the April 8, 1992, board meeting. Their study divided the courthouse roof into seven sections, prioritized the need for repairs for each section, and provided an estimated cost for each section.

<i>Priority One:</i>	<i>Nothing at this time</i>	
<i>Priority Two:</i>	<i>Roof B Assessor's Office</i>	<i>\$29,815</i>
	<i>Roof C State's Attorney</i>	<i>\$3,105</i>
	<i>Roof G Judge's Chamber</i>	<i>\$6,875</i>
<i>Priority Three:</i>	<i>Roof A Commissioners' Office</i>	<i>\$11,315</i>
	<i>Roof D Assistant State's Attorney</i>	<i>\$2,610</i>
	<i>Roof F Jury Room</i>	<i>\$2,700</i>
<i>Priority Four:</i>	<i>Roof E Original Courthouse</i>	<i>\$18,415¹³⁹</i>

After discussion of the report, the commissioners voted to take bids to repair the roof for sections B, C, G, D, and F for a total estimated cost of \$45,105. The bill from the architects was \$2,700, two hundred dollars more than the limit, but the board agreed to pay the total bill.¹⁴⁰

Two bids were received for repairing the roof. One was for \$43,000, while that from Dan Jewitt Construction Company was \$22,717, almost half the amount of the other bid and \$22,388 under the estimated cost. Since the estimate was so low, the commissioners agreed to add repairs to the roof over the commissioners' room and the sheriff's office. Dan Jewitt Construction's bid for repairs over the commissioner's room was \$9,974. The contract to repair the roof over the sheriff's office was awarded to Kehrer Brothers

¹³⁵ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 19, February 26, 1985, 117.

¹³⁶ Union County Commissioners Minutes, October 16, 1991, and November 27, 1991.

¹³⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, January 15, 1992, and January 22, 1992.

¹³⁸ Union County Commissioners Minutes, February 5, 1992.

¹³⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, April 8, 1992.

¹⁴⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, April 22, 1992, and April 29, 1992.

Construction, Inc., of New Memphis, Ill., who had the lowest bid of \$14,000.¹⁴¹ There was no further discussion or mention of completion of the work in the board minutes, but in November 1992, Dan Jewitt was paid \$32,691 and Kehrer Brothers was paid \$14,400.¹⁴²

In September 1993, Sheriff Dillon reported to the county board that the courthouse roof had leaked and that there was water damage to the carpet. The room or rooms that received the damage were not named in the minutes. The damage seems to have originated with faulty guttering, which the county advertised for bids to repair, but only received one bid from Dutch Guttering, Inc.¹⁴³ No action was taken and Sheriff Dillon again reported at the November meetings that the guttering was still leaking. The damage this time was in Judge Bigler's office where the ceiling tiles and carpet were ruined.¹⁴⁴ This was a part of the roof that had just been repaired the previous year. No subsequent discussion of repairs was found in the commissioners' minutes.

The county commissioners agreed to repair the ceiling in the state's attorney's office at the courthouse in July 1997, less than five years after it was previously repaired.¹⁴⁵ The county accepted bids for a new roof for the courthouse and in December 1997 they accepted the low bid from Ron Mays for \$12,515.¹⁴⁶ A judge stopped the work on the courthouse roof and to compensate Mays for the time lost, he was paid an extra \$600 from the liability fund.¹⁴⁷

The county commissioners called for bids for roof repairs to be submitted by June 18, 2007. It had been more than a decade since the courthouse had received any extensive renovations. The *Southern Illinoisan* reported that the commissioners believed that, "Repairs to the roof have become necessary not only because of age, but also because previous contractors did not do proper work to some of the structures."¹⁴⁸ Since the estimate exceeded \$20,000, the county had to ask for bids. Commissioner Jim Tweedy reported that the county had \$84,000 in its contingency fund, \$15,000 in a capital projects fund for the courthouse, and \$6,600 originally intended to pay Tweedy as a financial consultant.

Two bids were received for the roof repairs:

Tim Guthrey	\$30,888.00
Les Curtis Services	\$23,486.25 ¹⁴⁹

The commissioners accepted the smallest bid from Les Curtis Services, of Thebes, Illinois, on July 27, 2007.¹⁵⁰ Sheriff David Livesay reported at the March 7, 2008,

¹⁴¹ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, October 21, 1992.

¹⁴² Union County Commissioners' Minutes, November 6, 1992.

¹⁴³ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, September 29, 1993, and October 13, 1993.

¹⁴⁴ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, November 17, 1993.

¹⁴⁵ Union County Commissioners Minutes, July 16, 1997.

¹⁴⁶ Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 17, 1997.

¹⁴⁷ Union County Commissioners Minutes, April 15, 1998.

¹⁴⁸ "Union County Courthouse Needs Roof Repairs," *The Southern Illinoisan*, May 22, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 24, June 18, 2007, 35, 41. Les Curtis & Co. was paid \$14,471.12 on October 4, 2007 (Union County Clerk's check register and statement).

¹⁵⁰ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 24, July 27, 2007, 48.

meeting that construction of the courthouse was completed.¹⁵¹ The workers had damaged the awning at the entrance to the courthouse and the cost of a new awning was deducted from his statements. R. & R. Awning placed a new awning over the front door at the courthouse in October 2007 at the cost of \$1,147.¹⁵²

The melting of the ice that had accumulated on the roof of the courthouse during the ice storm of 2009 revealed a major problem with the roof and caused extensive damage to the courthouse. Several offices in the courthouse, especially those of the circuit clerk and county clerk, received water damage from the leakage. Some historically priceless records were damaged and sent to Springfield for cleaning and treatment.

Moving Out of the Courthouse

The likelihood of one day building a new courthouse was mentioned in the county commissioners' minutes as early as 1991. The county had outgrown its courthouse, but instead of making plans for another addition, the county began buying lots nearby the courthouse on West Market Street.

State's Attorney Wes Wilkins stated in a letter to Landreth Real Estate that the county was interested in purchasing the house and property on West Market Street that was adjacent to the courthouse.¹⁵³ When word was out that the county was actively involved in buying real estate near the courthouse, several owners offered their property for sale. Some of the offers were not even considered or discussed, if the purchase of the property would not meet the immediate needs of the county.¹⁵⁴

The county purchased a house from Dee Toler with two and a half lots adjoining the courthouse for \$31,000 in August 1992.¹⁵⁵ Judge John Bigler recommended that the office of Gene Plott, the county assessor, be moved into the two-story house next to the courthouse at the September 1992 meeting of the county board. The move would provide additional space in the courthouse for the courtroom. The board voiced concern over the move and stated that they wanted to meet with Plott to discuss the matter before authorizing the relocation.¹⁵⁶

An architect was hired to investigate the house purchased by the county and recommend what repairs needed to be done before the assessor's office could be moved. The next month the boiler in the house cracked and needed to be replaced.¹⁵⁷ Judges Bigler and Spomer did not like the delay in moving the assessor's office and advised the board of commissioners to move the office into the house by March 1, 1993, or one of the judges would issue an order to the sheriff to move the office.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ Union County Commissioners Minutes, Book 25, March 7, 2008, 8.

¹⁵² Union County Clerk's receipt, October 15, 2007.

¹⁵³ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, June 6, 1991.

¹⁵⁴ Wayman Cavaness offered his house at 205 North Locust Street to the county for \$16,000, which offer was not considered. George Lord offered his lot behind the Abstract Office for \$4,000, which the commissioners did discuss purchasing.

¹⁵⁵ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, August 12, 1992.

¹⁵⁶ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, September 21, 1992.

¹⁵⁷ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, December 16, 1992.

¹⁵⁸ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, February 3, 1993.

Bids were received for carpentry, painting, and electrical work on the house to make it suitable for the assessor's office, but the board voted at its February 1993 meeting to take no action and rejected all bids because of the expense to renovate the house.¹⁵⁹ In March the county advertised for bids to tear down the house.¹⁶⁰ One bid was received for \$6,800 from Pioneer Excavating, but the matter was tabled at the April meeting.¹⁶¹

The commissioners agreed in December 1998 to purchase the Methodist parsonage on West Market Street for \$45,000 and move the assessor's office there.¹⁶²

Most of the county government officials realized a need for a new courthouse or major renovations to the existing one by the 1990s. The County even hired Walker, Baker, & Associates, of Harrisburg to complete a master plan for the courthouse, which would include the cost of continuing in the present courthouse and a prediction of future needs, taking into consideration the growth of the county government. The cost of the study was \$2,500, but the report was not made a part of public records and cannot be located.

The county board began discussion at its February 1995 meeting about moving the assessor's, county clerk's, and treasurer's offices from the courthouse to the highway building next to the courthouse. The county highway department would then be moved into another building. This plan was never put into action. Another plan involved building new offices west of the courthouse, but State's Attorney Wes Wilkins advised the board that the judge would not allow any construction unless it included a new courtroom and offices.¹⁶³

Commissioner Lee Roy Rendleman led the discussion at the April 12, 1995, meeting about building a new courthouse. He envisioned a three-story building, which would include courtrooms and offices. The old courthouse would be kept and continue in use. Rendleman also advised that the only way plans for construction could legally begin was to get approval from the voters of Union County by passing a referendum.¹⁶⁴ Each county officer was asked to provide square footage requirements they would need in the new courthouse. The plan was to place the issue on the ballot that fall and to begin a public relations campaign to educate the voters about the need for new county facilities.

The issue of a new courthouse for Union County has never been placed on the ballot and the voters have never been given an opportunity to voice their opinion at the polls. The county government has obviously outgrown the 1858 courthouse, even with the 1894, 1963, 1967, and 1976 additions. County government has been forced out of necessity to expand beyond the present courthouse walls and to temporarily farm out its county offices to buildings in the vicinity of the courthouse.

¹⁵⁹ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, February 10, 1993, and February 17, 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, March 10, 1993.

¹⁶¹ Union County Commissioners' Minutes, April 14, 1993.

¹⁶² Union County Commissioners Minutes, December 2, 1998.

¹⁶³ Union County Commissioners Minutes, February 22, 1995.

¹⁶⁴ Union County Commissioners Minutes, April 12, 1995.

An Incomplete List of Union County Officers (1858 to 2009)

County Commissioners

William Eaves- 1873-1874
Joshua Lewis- 1873-1878
Oliver C. Brown- 1873-1876
Alfred Lence- 1874-1881
Daniel Warren Brown- 1876-1880
Martin Van Buren Ussery- 1878-1882
William Carroll Rich- 1879-1883
Simeon L. Wisner- 1880-1887
Frank Neibauer- 1881-1884
John J. Keith- 1882-1889
Henry W. Otrich- 1885-1891
Josiah Bean- 1886-1889
Willis Cauble- 1888-1897
Levi Jasper Hess- 1889-1895
William A. Ridge- 1890-1893
Eli Eddleman- 1893-1899 (died in office)
John D. Wilson- 1895-1901
Edwin B. Wing- 1897-1900
Zachariah Groner- 1899-1902 (appointed to replace Eli Eddleman)
Benjamin F. Hartline- 1901-1903
Christopher Jerome Sitter- 1901-1904
Samuel F. Davie- 1902-1908
James Kelley Walton- 1903-1906, 1928-1930
Jacob D. Benton- 1904-1906
C. Jerry Boyd- 1906-
W. Otto Worstman- 1906-1907
L. T. Hardin- 1907-1910
Lafayette Rich- 1908-1911
Mathias Caraker- 1909-1912
L. V. Snider- 1910-1922
Paul W. Baker- 1911-1914
William S. Hagler- 1912-1915
Charles W. Hartline- 1914-1920
William A. Rendleman- 1915-1921
Thomas Rixleben- 1920-1923
Louis A. Stout- 1921-1927
Fred L. Johnson- 1922-1925
William Smith- 1923-1926

Jeff M. Johnson- 1925-1928
Harvey A. Plott- 1926-1929
Blake Broadway- 1927-1930
Clem C. Baggott- 1929-1931
Thomas Peter Sifford- 1930-1934
George B. Aldridge- 1930-1938
Daniel R. Davie- 1933-1934
Arthur J. Casper- 1935-1936
Charlie Eddleman- 1935-1936
Ernest C. Boyd- 1937-1942
James F. Brown- 1937-1944
Ward D. Dodd- 1939-1944, 1849-1950
George A. Hill- 1943-1944
William A. Albright- 1945-1948
Oscar Dillow- 1945-1946
Fred Cunningham- 1945-1950
Harry R. Rowe- 1947-1952
John Goodman- 1951-1958
Jean D. Fulenwider- 1951-1956
Hugh H. Lamer- 1953-1958
Cletus E. Smith- 1957-1964
Thomas J. Eddleman- 1959-1960
Lloyd Spiller- 1959-1960
Jesse Aldridge- 1961-1970
Samuel F. Reeves- 1961-1962
Clemon E. Johnson- 1963-1968
Louis "Ned" Foley- 1965-1974
Johnny W. Wilson- 1969-1972
Everett Brasel- 1971-1972
W. P. "Bud" Rendleman- 1973-1980
Herman L. Stokes- 1973-1982
Carl W. Boyd- 1975-1980

(Illinois Blue Books from 1981 on only listed the chairman, the names of other officeholders can be obtained from commissioners' minutes.)

W. L. Rendleman- 1983-1984
Wilbur Gibbs- 1985-1986
Mickey Kelley- 1987-1990
Wayne Manus- 1991-1992
Lee Roy Rendleman- 1993-2000
Jim Watkins- 1997-2002
Jack Eddleman- 2003-2004
Bill Jackson- 2005-2008

John Garner- 2007

Jim Tweedy- 2007

Randy Lambdin

Don Denny 2008-

Sheriffs

Syrian Davis- 1858

Alexander Jackson Nimmo- 1858-1860, 1874-1878

Lorenzo P. Wilcox- 1860-1862

Thomas J. Finley- 1862-1864

William Carroll Rich- 1864-1866, 1868-1870

Joseph Hannibal McElhaney- 1866-1868

Jacob Hileman- 1870-1874

George Barringer- 1878-1880

Henry Rendleman- 1880-1882

Oliver P. Baggott- 1882-1886

Lafayette Rich- 1886-1890

William Carroll Rich, Jr.- 1890-1894

George W. Day- 1894-1898

W. Henry Crane- 1898-1902

Levi Jasper Hess- 1902-1906

James Kelley Walton- 1906-1910

George H. Huggins- 1910-1914

Walter E. Kimbro- 1914-1918, 1921 (appointed sheriff in July to fill vacancy)

John J. Tygett- 1918-1921 (died in office)

Samuel D. Hurst- 1921-1922

Henry G. Hileman- 1922-1926, 1952 (coroner appointed sheriff to fill vacancy)

George W. Lyerly- 1926-1930

Robert A. Blaylock- 1930-1934

E. Clyde McIntosh- 1934-1938

J. Harley Wilkins- 1938-1942 (died in office)

Roy Wilkins- 1942-1946

W. Earl Batson- 1946-1950

Paul Dodd- 1950-1952 (resigned)

Roy G. Dillow- 1952-1958

Claude M. Stearns- 1958-1962

Jean D. Fulenwider- 1963-1966

Hewitt H. Lamer- 1967-1970

Elmer C. Kelley- 1971-1974

Larry L. Tripp- 1975-1982

Robin A. Dillon- 1983-1994

Harlan Coffinan- 1995-1998

Jim Nash- 1999-2006

David Livesay

County Clerks

Thomas J. Finley- 1958-1861
Alexander Jackson Nimmo- 1861-1866, 1870-1874
James Evans- 1866-1870
William S. Hanners- 1874-1882
J. Henry Hilboldt- 1882-1898
Will J. Laws- 1898-1906
Charles L. Kimmel- 1906-1922
Edward T. Woodworth- 1922-1926
Paul H. Ellis- 1926-1946
Perl Zwahlen- 1946-1966
Fred W. Blaylock- 1967-1986
Bobby Toler, Jr.- 1987-

Circuit Clerks

Thomas Hileman- 1858-1872
A. Polk Jones- 1872-1880 (died in office)
Henry P. Cozby- 1879 (appointed to fill the vacancy)
E. M. Barnwell- 1880-1888
William H. Peak- 1888-1904
Henry C. Sifford- 1904-1916
Fred Bacon- 1916-1920
W. Everett Lemons- 1920-1932
Louie C. Kelley- 1932-1948
Charles E. McIntosh- 1948-1976
Mattilene Page- 1977-1996
Lorraine Moreland- 1997-

Treasurers

Richard Nimmo- 1858-1860
Benjamin P. Elkins- 1860-1864
James F. Wallace- 1864-1868
Oliver P. Hill- 1868-1872
Samuel Martin- 1872-1876
William Carroll Rich- 1876-1882
James Johnson- 1882-1886
Eli Mull- 1886-1890
Daniel Sifford- 1890-1894
W. H. Crane- 1894-1898
George C. Bean- 1898-1902

John Calvin DeWitt- 1902-1906
James D. R. Brown- 1906-1910
Thomas C. Ury- 1910-1914
Oscar O. Karraker- 1914-1918, 1938-1942
Jeff M. Johnson- 1918-1922
Paul H. Ellis- 1922-1926
Melvin C. Treece- 1926-1930
Charles O. Otrich- 1930-1934
J. Harley Wilkins- 1934-1938
Samuel F. Reeves- 1942-1946
Dorris L. Hankla- 1946-1950
W. Earl Batson- 1950-1954
Ethel Turner- 1954-1958
Carl R. Eddleman- 1958-1962
Hewitt H. Lamer- 1963-1966
Louie C. Kelley- 1967-1970
Mickey Joe Kelley- 1971-1982
Bobby G. Myers- 1983-

State's Attorneys

Monroe Carroll Crawford- 1858, 1860-1864
Anderson P. Corder- 1858-1860
George W. Hall- 1864-1868
Robert R. Townes- 1868-1872
Jackson Frick- 1872-1876
William S. Day- 1876-1880
David W. Karraker- 1880-1888
William Chatton Moreland- 1888-1892
A. Ney Sessions- 1892-1896
James Lingle- 1896-1908, 1916-1920
William D. Lyerle- 1906-1916
Ray Wallace Karraker- 1920-1928
Ford L. Rendleman- 1928-1936
John Paul Davis- 1936-1966
William A. Lewis- 1967-1970
R. Corydon Finch- 1971-1972
James W. Leaton- 1973-1976
William B. Ballard, Jr.- 1977-1980
Rodney A. Clutts- 1981-1984
H. Wesley Wilkins- 1985-1996
Christopher K. Wells- 1997-2000
John Bigler- 2001-2004
Allen James- 2005-2008

Tyler Edmonds- 2008-

Circuit Court Judges

William K. Parrish- 1858
Alexander M. Jenkins- 1859-1863 .
William Joshua Allen- 1861
John H. Mulkey- 1864
William H. Green- 1866
Monroe Carroll Crawford- 1867
Daniel M. Browning- 1878
Oliver O. Harker- 1878
David Jewett Barker, Jr.- 1878

County Judges

Thomas Hileman- 1858-1886
Monroe Carroll Crawford- 1886-1918
David W. Karraker- 1918-1922
Ernest S. Alden- 1922-1930, 1934-1936 (died in office)
Hal A. Spann- 1930-1933 (resigned when elected circuit court judge)
B. E. Kerley- 1933-1934 (appointed), 1936 (appointed)
Ford L. Rendleman- 1936-1944
Lewis Butler Tuthill- 1944-1950
Paul D. Reese- 1950-1962

Associate Judges

William Penrod- 1858-1861
Wilson Misenhimer- 1858-1861
William Eaves- 1861-1869
Ephraim Kimmel- 1861-1867
George W. Penninger- 1866-1874
Napoleon Bonapart Collins- 1869-1874

Attorneys

The circuit court minutes mention the names of the first attorneys who practiced law at the courthouse. The earliest ones were John Dougherty, William Alexander Hacker, David Jewett Baker, Jr., Henry Watson Webb, James H. Smith, R. E. Yost, Richard S. Nelson, Wesley Davidson, Leonard Kean, Semple G. Parks, William Joshua Allen, John Henry Mulkey, Andrew Duncan Duff, John Alexander Logan, Isham Nicholas Haynie, Talbot Rawlings, William K. Parrish, J. G. Cameron, D. N. Hamilton, David Lyman

Phillips, Anderson P. Corder, U. E. Robinson, W. H. Logan, H. H. Green, William Lafayette Dougherty.

Jackson Frick, Matthew J. Inscore, William Chatton Moreland, Sidney Grear, David W. Karraker, William Carroll Rich, Hugh Andrews, Jesse Ware, W. B. Maxey, Henry F. Bussey, Judson Phillips, Townsend W. Foster,

Others include John E. Naill, Alexander Dougherty, W. A. Spann, W. S. Day, Robert W. Townes, and Daniel L. Brooks.

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"Fined for Contempt," December 10, 1870

"The County Court," December 17, 1870

"Build Vaults for the Records," January 6, 1894

"County Commissioners' Court," January 20, 1894

"Court House Vaults," February 17, 1894

April 14, 1894

April 21, 1894
May 5, 1894
May 26, 1894
June 30, 1894
July 14, 1894
Professional Ads, October 13, 1894

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"To Construct New Addition to Court House," May 4, 1967
"County Board Awards Contract," September 21, 1967

The Southern Illinoisan

"County Commissioners Accept Bids," February 22, 1973
"Board Votes to Expand Union County Courthouse," October 15, 1976
"Courthouse Contract Awarded," October 28, 1976
"Union County Board of Commissioners," November 16, 1976
"Union County Courthouse Needs Roof Repairs," May 22, 2007

The Talk

Professional Ads, August 4, 1905

2005-2009Major Courthouse ExpensesFrom Statements Filed in the County Clerk's Office

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Company</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
13 Sep 2005	L & P Carpet 4155 E. Vienna St., Anna	\$4,400.00	(carpet for court room No. 2)
16 Sep 2005	Premium Mechanical Services 3185 North High, Jackson, Mo (funds from Rebuild Carbondale/ Union County matching grant)	\$6,217.00	(installed hot pipe insulation to the main steam line on boiler; remove & replace condensation pump lift station; replace 3' rusted leaking condensation pipe; replace defective and leaking steam/air vent on condensate trap)
7 Dec 2005	Guthrie Construction (paid from building grant)	\$780.00	(patch wall in state's attorney's office using 5/8" dry wall, mud seams, sand, and cleanup)
7 Dec 2005	Guthrie Construction (paid from building grant)	\$2,510.00	(frame up divider wall in men's rest room to hang plumbing fixtures, sheeted with plywood and covered with Marlight bathroom finish; entry door included)
7 Dec 2005	Guthrie Construction (paid from building grant)	\$725.00	(repaired seams and gutters on northwest corner on upper roof over judge's chamber)
12 Dec 2005	Belcher Electric (funds from Rebuild Carbondale/ Union County matching grant)	\$7,166.00	(replaced ballast in courthouse and emergency lighting)

15 Dec 2005	T & C Plumbing (paid from building grant)	\$2,164.53	(1 st payment on 3 urinals; flush valves; 3 stools & water supplies for urinals & stools)
6 Feb 2006	T & C Plumbing (paid from building grant)	\$2,879.00	(final payment on completion of setting fixtures and drinking fountain repair)
16 Feb 2006	Belcher Electric 400 E. Davie St., Anna	\$416.35	(lighting; paid for by building grant)
23 May 2006	L & P Carpet 4155 E. Vienna St., Anna office; (paid by courthouse grant)	\$5,214.00	(carpet shipped to county clerk's office where installed not stated)
3 Jan 2007	Marmic Fire & Safety 813 Progress, Cape Girardeau	\$422.84	(recharge, inspection, and Ansul 10 LB ABC Fire Extg.)
15 Aug 2007	Gurley & Son Heating & Air Cond. 1540 Old Highway 51 N, Anna	\$426.11	(service AC units, repair and replace motor & capacitor)
16 Aug 2007	L & P Carpet 4155 E. Vienna St., Anna	\$1,652.80	(carpet for lower judge's office and hall)
6 Sep 2007	Gurley & Son Heating & Air Cond.	\$2,073.32	(furnace & coil installation for back court room)
13 Sep 2007	Stewart Construction 322 Willards Ferry Rd., Jonesboro	\$220.00	(work done to replace fixed window unit)
24 Sep 2007	Leslie Curtis Services Rio Vista, Thebes, Ill.	\$15,618.12	(stripping, 211 repairing, reshingling the roof on

	(\$1,147 was deducted from his bill replace the awning damaged by his workers)		courthouse and to outbuilding associated with courthouse; removed, rebuilt and reinstalled dome of courthouse)
15 Oct 2007	R.& R. Awning	\$1,147.00	(no statement, only record filed was in check register)
5 Nov 2007	Gurley & Son Heating & Air. Cond.	\$2,188.75	(furnace installation in the probation office in the courthouse)
18 Feb 2008	Premium Mechanical & Automation 3185 North High, Jackson, MO	\$356.00	(service on boiler; boiler making noise, too much water in boiler)
24 Sep 2008	Wyatt Construction 310 Wilson St., Anna	\$3,800.00	(material, wood, vinyl seats, podem (?), labor, etc)—Billed to Mark Boic—perhaps for office repairs after roof leak?)
26 Jan 2009	Marmic Fire & Safety Co.	\$97.00	(inspection of extinguishers and service call)
9 Feb 2009	Guthrie Construction Box 639, Cobden	\$3,620.00	(emergency repair on flat roofs from ice damage)
11 Feb 2009	Rusty's Home Center 418 E. Davie St., Anna	\$114.90	(ceiling tile following roof leak)
11 Feb 2009	T & C Plumbing Buncombe, Ill.	\$125.00	(cleaned out floor drain in men's room in basement)
19 Feb 2009	Belcher Electric Co. 400 E. Davie St., Anna	\$95.25	(lighting, ballast in county clerk's office)

3 Mar 2009	L & P Carpet	\$4,796.12	(carpet for UP Law library, record & lower office)
4 Apr 2009	Guthrie Construction	\$605.00	(repaired bottom edge of roof where decking was exposed to prevent leaking)